

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
WESTERN DIVISION

CIVIL ACTION FILE NO.: 5-17-CV-604-FL

STACY MONROE, as Administrator for the)
Estate of ERLINE FREEMAN,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
v.)
)
TAURUS HOLDINGS, INC., and)
TAURUS INTERNATIONAL)
MANUFACTURING, INC.,)
)
Defendants.)
_____)

**ORDER GRANTING JOINT CONSENT MOTION
TO FILE DOCUMENTS UNDER SEAL**

This matter is before the Court on the parties' October 15, 2019 joint consent motion to file a proposed Settlement Agreement and Release under seal as well as any Orders and transcripts in connection with this Court's ruling on the parties' contemporaneously filed motion for Court approval of said settlement agreement. No member of the public has filed a response or objection to the motion and this matter is now ripe for disposition.

Because the proposed settlement agreement involves a minor beneficiary, court approval of the settlement is required pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 28A-13-3. The parties accordingly intend to submit the proposed Settlement Agreement for the Court's review in determining whether to approve the settlement and also seek to file the document under seal to protect the minor beneficiary's privacy interests. The Court finds this request well-taken and, for the reasons set forth below, grants the parties' motion.

In accordance with *Stone v. Univ. of Maryland Med. Sys. Corp.*, 855 F.2d 178 (4th Cir. 1988) and *In re Knight Pub. Co.*, 743 F.2d 231 (4th Cir. 1984), the Court has considered less drastic alternatives to sealing the proposed Settlement Agreement and Release in its entirety and finds that filing the document under seal is necessary and reasonably tailored to protect the minor's privacy interest as the identity of the minor cannot be reasonably protected otherwise. The Court also finds that the minor's privacy interest outweighs the general public's common law right of access to the proposed Settlement Agreement and Release. Further, the Court finds that the government's compelling interest in protecting the minor's privacy outweighs any First Amendment right of access to the subject document.

Accordingly, the Court, having read and considered the parties' joint consent motion to file the proposed Settlement Agreement and Release under seal, and for good cause shown, hereby ORDERS that the parties' Joint Consent Motion to File Document Under Seal is GRANTED and the proposed Settlement Agreement and Release shall be placed in the Court record under seal. The Court further ORDERS that any Orders and transcripts in connection with this Court's ruling on the parties' motion for Court-approval of the settlement agreement be sealed as well.

SO ORDERED, this the 24th day of October, 2019.



LOUISE W. FLANAGAN
United States District Judge